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Ceramics

MONTHLY

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January 1955 50¢



underglaze decoration

Crager

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ELECTRIKILN
HTL-16 for Cone 8
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Crating \$12.00
Pyrometer \$28.75



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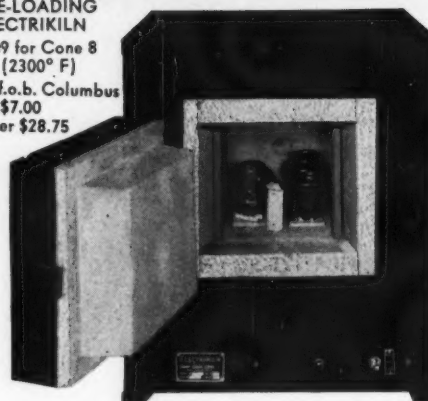
TOP-LOADING MODEL NO.	FIRING CHAMBER				MAX. TEMP.
	WIDTH	LENGTH	HEIGHT	CU. IN.	
HTL-16	16	16	15	3840	2300° F
TL-8	18	18	15	4860	2000° F
TL-6	12	12	10	1440	2000° F
TL-5	11	11	10	1210	2000° F
TL-4	11	11	6½	786.5	2000° F

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	WIDTH	DEPTH	HEIGHT	CU. IN.	
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HT-09	9	9	9	729	2300° F
C-1214	12	14	11	1848	2000° F
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509	9	9	9	729	2000° F

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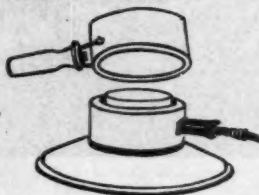
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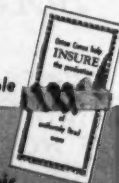


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Ceramics MONTHLY

Volume 3, Number 1

JANUARY • 1955

50 cents per copy

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letters

MESTROVIC ONE OF BEST

Gentlemen:

I . . . discovered to my delight and surprise Kay Harrison's fine article on Mestrovic [August issue]. I studied with him for four years and was his assistant for one year, and for the reason that I was able to know him so well, I felt that the article was one of the nicest I had read out of the many that have emerged since his arrival in 1947.

I liked her quiet direct manner, but most of all her description of the man and his works . . .

LEE BURNHAM

Lee Burnham Studios
Palatka, Fla.

NO COVER LOVER!

Gentlemen:

We think CM is the best magazine for the studio potter and pottery teacher, but we do wish for better covers! Photos of pottery or potters would be far better, we feel, than the recent "wastes of space!"

WILLIAM E. FARRINGTON

Westfield, Mass.

NEED SIC?

Gentlemen:

For the benefit of those who have tried in vain to find silicon carbide (FFF grade) for local reduction glazes: I finally found it at a chemical house, King and Malcolm, 215 Water St., New York City, after a

whole day spent tracking it down! I hope the information will save my fellow potters much time and energy. It was the only place in the whole city.

RUTH L. TAYLOR

Pomona, N.Y.

PRACTICE POTS

Gentlemen:

Receipt of the "Monthly" usually means something meaty in the way of pottery reading. Nothing, however, as good and thorough as Mr. Atherton's previous two articles [July and April] was anticipated [in November]. . . .

I do have a bone to pick with Mr. Sellers' last, "Carve Your Wheel-Thrown Pots." While there is nothing so sacred about a thrown pot, it seems to me to be the wrong way of teaching the skill to encourage beginners "—if it doesn't turn out too well, you can always make something else out of it." A practice pot is only that.

BENJAMIN STEINZOR

State University of New York
Buffalo, New York

◆ We can appreciate reader Steinzor's comments; however, we believe he is thinking only of the serious pottery student. The serious student may be quite content to practice throwing for months or years, tossing all of his wheel attempts back in the clay bin, just as the serious music student is content for years to practice scales and techniques.

With the hobby potters, and there are

many of them, the situation differs. They want to have something to show for their efforts rather quickly, just as the hobby music student wants to learn a tune as soon as possible.

If cutting practice pots into ash trays helps sustain interest in the potter's art and prevents discouragement and a shift of interest to other crafts and hobbies (or more questionable pastimes), we feel it is a step in the right direction.—Ed.

SYRACUSE SHOW

We are thrilled with your December number and its wonderful coverage of the 18th Ceramic National: quite the best and most complete coverage we have ever had for any of our Ceramic shows!

It was splendid to have you add the article about Mrs. Robineau's famous "Scarab Vase," with the [photo]; and what a fine idea it was to announce the prize-winners with portraits of each one! Something no one has ever thought of doing before. Also the comments by the final Jury added so much. But your magazine can be counted on for original ideas . . .

ANNA W. OLMSTED
Director

Syracuse Museum of Fine Arts
Syracuse, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

. . . The idea of covering this show is excellent . . . I had intended suggesting you cover some of the other shows of merit around the country like the Los Angeles County Fair, Sacramento State Fair, etc. This will stimulate lots of interest for people who appreciate the stoneware and thrown-porcelain type of pottery.

DEAN STRAWN

Hughson, Cal.

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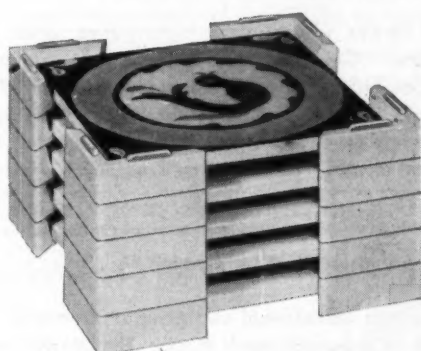
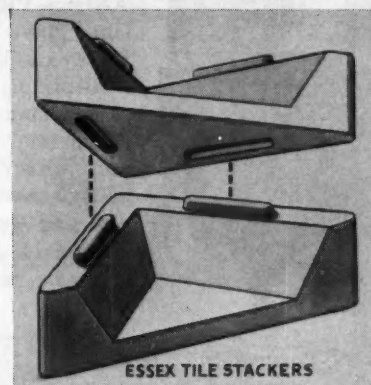
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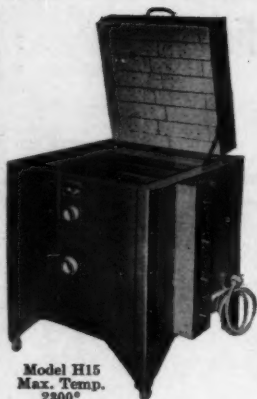
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back again . . .

is Dorothy Perkins with another authoritative series and another "first." CM old-timers will certainly remember Dorothy's detailed series on "Free Form" (vintage 1953); now we have another brilliant series on the making of models and molds and plaster-working in general. And it starts next month! We know you'll all say, "Welcome Back."

more of the same . . .

will be there too: instructional and general interest articles will continue to greet you each month. The special series on Underglaze Decoration which begins in this issue (see Page 20) is to be a regular monthly feature. The decorator, especially, should find these articles to be of particular interest and benefit. Our regulars will be back of course—O'Hara, Holst, Kenny, Sellers, et al—and you can look forward to some "guest writers" in the throwing and enameling departments.

All of which seems to point (ceramically speaking) to an informative and generally

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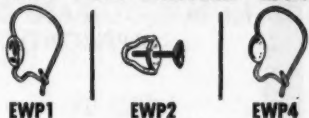
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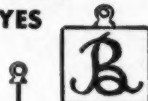
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January 3-28

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PENNSYLVANIA, Pittsburgh

February 16-March 14

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TENNESSEE, Chattanooga

January 16-February 6

Italian Arts and Crafts, contemporary exhibition circulated by Smithsonian Institution. At George Thomas Hunter Gallery of Art.

VIRGINIA, Richmond

January 14-February 13

Designer-Craftsmen U.S.A., at Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, shows more than two hundred handcrafted objects by contemporary Americans. Represents all parts of the country.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

January 8-February 15

9th Annual Area Exhibition at Corcoran Gallery of Art includes ceramics.

(Continued on Page 9)

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(Begins on Page 8)

WHERE TO SHOW

★ national competition

FLORIDA, Miami

April 24-May 8

★Third Annual Ceramic Exhibition sponsored by Ceramic League of Miami opens at Lowe Gallery, University of Miami, and circulates later among eight southeastern galleries. Ceramists including enamelists eligible. Jury; awards. Fee, \$3; blanks due April 1, entries April 6, 7. For information, write Marcell Dunn, exh. sec'y., at 908 Paradise Ave., Coral Gables, Fla.

INDIANA, South Bend

May 15-29

Third Annual Regional Ceramic Exhibition open to present and former residents of Indiana and Michigan within 100-mile radius of South Bend. Jury; prizes. Fee, \$2. Entry cards due Apr. 25; work, May 1. For blanks write South Bend Art Asso., 620 W. Washington Ave.

KANSAS, Wichita

April 11-May 11

★Tenth National Decorative Arts-Ceramic Exhibition. Jury; prizes. Fee \$3. Entries due March 8-15. Write Mrs. Maude Schollenberger, Wichita Art Association, 401 No. Belmont Ave.

LOUISIANA, New Orleans

February 27-March 22

★54th Annual Spring Exhibition at Isaac Delgado Museum of Art. Includes creative craftwork. Jury; prizes. Fee: \$5 membership in Art Association of New Orleans. Entries due Feb. 9. Write museum.

MASSACHUSETTS, Springfield

April 3-May 8

Massachusetts Crafts of Today, fourth annual, at George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum. Open to all craftsmen in state. Fee: members of Massachusetts Assoc. of Handicraft Groups, \$1; non-members, \$2. Entries due March 8-12. For details, write Robert W. Gray, 40 Highland St., Worcester.

NEW YORK, Buffalo

March 2-April 3

21st Annual Western New York Artists exhibition at Albright Art Gallery. Artists residing in 14 counties eligible. Mediums include ceramics. Jury; prizes. Fee: \$2. Entry cards due Feb. 2; work, Feb. 7. Write Miss Beatrice Howe at the Gallery for blanks.

WASHINGTON, Seattle

March 6-April 6

Third Annual Northwest Craftsmen's Exhibition at Henry Gallery. Open to Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, British Columbia and Alaska. Ceramics, enamels, ceramic sculpture included. Jury; awards. Entries due Feb. 12. Sponsors: Henry Gallery, The Clay Club, and others. Blanks ready early January—write Henry Gallery.

WEST VIRGINIA, Huntington

February 6-27

★Enamels and ceramic jewelry to be included in American Jewelry & Related Objects Exhibition at Huntington Galleries. Craftsmen living in U. S., eligible. Jury; \$1500 awards. Entry cards and work due Jan. 10; no fee. Sponsored by Hickock Company of Rochester, N. Y.

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The book sells for \$5 and can be obtained by writing directly to Zena Holst, 1225 McClelland St., Salt Lake City, Utah.

Enameling Trivet

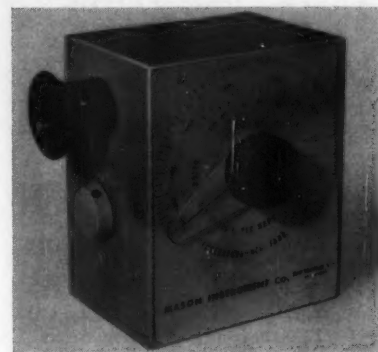


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suggestions

from our readers

MOLD RECONDITIONER

My leaf-plate mold was well worn after I had poured a hundred or more pieces from it; the veins in the leaf were barely noticeable. I found that the mold design could be given new life by carefully running a blunt orangewood stick along each vein, digging out just a little plaster.

—Ruth Haslam

Palmerton, Pa.

CLAY CUTTER

The pastry cutter with blunt stainless steel blades is an ideal



tool for cutting off large or small chunks of clay from the supply bin. It is especially helpful for preparing easy-to-handle blocks when unloading a barrel of plastic clay.

—Kenneth Gogel

Cedar Falls, Iowa

GROG MADE EASY

Instead of laboriously pounding on bisque ware to make grog, try this easy way.

Roll out a thin sheet of clay and allow it to dry thoroughly. When it is dry, roll over it again, crushing the clay sheet into small particles, screen, then fire. It is much easier to first crush the clay, then fire it, instead of vice versa. Incidentally, the resulting grog particles will be quite smooth and easy to handle because this procedure produces very few sharp edges.

—Virginia Patte

Asbury Park, N. J.

RED GLAZES

Commercial red-firing glazes may give quite a bit of trouble in the kiln: many of them require more oxygen than do the other glazes. I find that I have much better results when I fire them near the peephole of the kiln or when I prop the kiln

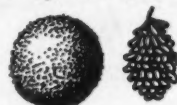
lid open slightly as the maturing temperature is reached.

—Vernon Seeley

Seeley's Ceramic Service
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TEXTURING WITH NATURE

One of my most unusual textured pieces of ceramics was



done with a hedge-apple (Osage orange). Another excellent texturing tool is a pine cone.

By using the flat end of a small pine cone, you can get a flower-like appearance. Turning and rolling the pine cone on a clay slab will give a scale-like texture; crisscrossing gives still another unusual texture.

Best results will be had on very moist clay. You can smooth away the undesirable imperfections when the clay is dry.

—Leta Ross

Mud Roost Ceramic Studio
Emporia, Kans.

GARLIC PRESS CLAY

The kitchen is the heart of the home, but I'll wager the ceramic room sports as many kitchen tools as does the kitchen! And here's another addition—

The garlic press makes wonderful strings or threads of



clay. This clay hair is just what you need for that pink poodle or for those ruffles around the clown's neck and wrists.

—Dorothy Gutzmer

Hinsdale, Ill.

Market for Ideas

Send your bright ideas to *Ceramics Monthly* — with photos or sketches, if applicable. We pay \$1 to \$5 for suggestions used in this column. (Sorry, but we can't acknowledge or return unused items.)

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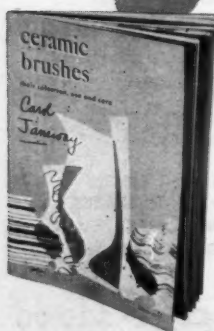
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MOSAICS

from bits of colored tile

Mosaic work—it may be in the form of an impressive architectural panel used indoors or out, or the colorful collar on a sculptured cat, or even a simple decoration set in the wall of a clay pot. Whatever the form, mosaic can be used with startling effect in modern settings.

Mosaic is the ancient art of creating surface decoration by inlaying small pieces of colored glass or tile, called *tesserae*. We do not often see contemporary examples of it. But at the Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles, the old technique is used in new ways and carried to a high level of art. There, the students create ceramic mo-



saic panels which consistently win international recognition. Making and using ceramic tesserae is not too difficult a process in itself—as Sister Magdalen Mary, of the school's art faculty, describes it. But first and last, she warns the novice that it is not technique but what you do with it that makes the difference. Design, as in any other art or craft, is the important factor in composing a mosaic.

For the ceramist who wants to try his hand at mosaic work, whether it be a wall panel, table top or decorative section on pottery, Sister Magdalen Mary describes below how to make ceramic tesserae from clay and how to fasten the small glazed pieces to a permanent background.

—You begin with a slab of clay rolled out between guides to about the thickness of a school ruler. The slab can be glazed at once, or several days later provided it can be kept damp (slabs can be stored on top of each other with plain paper between to protect the surface to be glazed). Glaze is brushed on and should lie flat so the tesserae won't have pillow-type tops which would reflect light distractingly. Glazing could be done by dipping after the pieces are cut but that is a slower process; spraying, however, is out of the question because the tiny tiles would be blown away.

—It takes experience to tell when the glazed slab (or slabs) is ready for cutting into pieces. If the slab is too wet, it is hard to pick up the tesserae and they warp; if it is too dry, the pieces chip and the glaze falls off. (Even though gum is added to the glaze, some flaking is unavoidable.) If glazed as soon as it is rolled out, instead of stored, the clay should be solid enough to cut in from one or two hours. Avoid making a bevel because edges that slant cannot be fitted close to each other later. The shapes can be small and large, square and triangular, long and narrow—all add to the variety and help to solve the problem of leftover



FORGET art rules and invent, the teacher advises. Let the tesserae suggest the lines and shapes of the mosaic. "The Visitation" (30½ x 35½), above, was done by Margaret Moroney as a student at Immaculate Heart College. Detail, at left, shows the little pieces of glazed tile which put together make the complicated mosaic composition.

Photos: Christy-Shepherd

corners which invariably come up in the final composition.

—The tesserae are placed in the kiln immediately after the slab is cut because, if allowed to dry before moving, they lose their glaze. Firing temperatures, of course, depend on the glaze and the color desired. In the one-fire process used here, some glazes will crawl but they can be used for texture or refired with a touch of different colored glaze on exposed spots. Cracked glazes also add variety.

—As soon as you have sufficient shapes and colors, the tesserae are ready to be organized in a mosaic composition. They are fastened to a background with one or another commercial adhesive (we prefer Miracle Thin-Set Ceramic Tile Cement). The adhesive can be spread on each tessera as it is placed on the background; or it can be spread over a small area (quick drying has to be considered) and the tesserae fastened to it. This system is sometimes employed: the pieces are arranged on a permanent background without any binder, and the whole mosaic is covered with a mixture (Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company's 3M Brand No. EC880); the mixture works its way under the

(Please turn to Page 36)

International recognition of mosaics made by students at Immaculate Heart College is well-deserved reward for Sister Magdalen Mary, I. H. M., their teacher, as well as Chairman of Art. Her helpful comments on how the small tiles are made and organized in a mosaic are given here as aids to ceramists who want to use the colorful medium in their own work.





Throwing on the Potter's Wheel

CUTTING THE FOOT RIM

by TOM SELLERS



1. measure thickness of clay . . .



2. center pot on wheel, fasten . . .



3. smooth off the bottom . . .

Learning to cut the foot rim on your thrown pots is as important an item as mastery of the throwing itself. A ragged, poorly designed foot can easily ruin an otherwise handsome shape. Properly made, the foot can give lift to a piece of pottery, producing a more delicate and graceful appearance in the pot and preventing it from seeming table-bound.

Functionally, the foot can prevent damage to the pot, since it is better able to absorb shock than a flat, broad surface. And it can protect the surface upon which the pot is placed: since the foot elevates the container, a delicate surface would not be marred if the pot contained a hot substance.

Cutting foot rims and tooling, or trimming, pots are not difficult things to learn; but don't save pots for foot rim practice until you know your work is right. Cutting a foot will only be more difficult for the beginner if the work is not round or has an uneven lip. When you feel your work is satisfactory, lift your pot from the wheel and place it in a damp box (the refrigerator works nicely) for slow drying.

The pot is ready for foot rimming when it is leather-hard; that is, stiff enough to be handled without deforming yet not too dry. The length of time required to reach this condition depends on the method of drying and on atmospheric conditions. Usually it is one or two days after being thrown.

Proper hardness of the clay is very important for tooling. If the clay is too soft, it will drag and clog the cutting tool. If it is too hard, tooling will be difficult. In the latter case, dampen the pot all over with a wet sponge, repeating the process several times until the clay is in a more workable condition.

Good turning tools are extremely important. The cutting end should be firm; those that are flexible, such as wire-end tools, tend to chatter, giving an uneven surface. Thin steel cutting blades, sharp either on one edge or on both, are best. Handle lengths should be from six to ten inches for secure gripping and, consequently, better control. It is advisable to have a round-end tool for cutting and a flat-end tool for finishing. Don't handicap your efforts with tools you can't control!

The type of footing tooled in a pot varies with the individual potter as well as with the locale. Some potters, particularly the Orientals, merely cut their pots from the wheel and consider them finished. Some tool little more than a slightly concave bottom on the pot, and others do a more formal job.

The foot rim demonstrated here falls into the latter category: it is a rather formal, highly finished, foot rim. As you follow the photos and text, pay particular attention to the methods used for handling the tools and to the



This is another article in the author's current series on throwing. In subsequent articles Mr. Sellers will cover specific shapes including pots with lids, pitchers, and many others.

Acknowledgement is made to the B & I Mfg. Co., Burlington, Wis., for the loan of their table-model potter's wheel used in this demonstration.

procedure in general which is described in full detail.

1. Before attempting any tooling you must first determine how much clay was left in the bottom of the pot. With the pot on a flat surface, lay a stick or rigid tool across the top beyond the edges. Now, stand a stick upright on the outside and mark with a pencil where the horizontal piece crosses it. Repeat the process by placing the vertical stick inside the pot, being sure it stands on the lowest inside area, and again mark it where it is crossed by the horizontal. The distance between the two pencil marks on the vertical stick is the actual thickness of the bottom of the pot at its *thinnest point*, and is an indication of how much trimming is necessary and how deep a foot rim you can cut.

Another kind of measurement can be taken by feel: run the wall of the pot from the lip to the base between your thumb and forefinger. With a little experience you can tell where the wall begins to get thicker (toward the bottom), and you can make a mark to indicate how far down to tool in order to eliminate excess thickness, hence excessive weight.

2. The pot is inverted on the wheel head, centered and then fastened in place. The concentric circles which are inscribed on most wheel heads are a helpful guide to centering; you cannot, however, depend upon them exclusively. In most cases they are not accurate enough for precision work; moreover, your pot may be slightly off-center. Follow this procedure for accurate centering:

With your arms and hands firmly braced, carefully move a pencil or pointed wooded tool toward the pot, as the wheel turns slowly, until it touches at the lowest point where tooling is desired. Move the pot very carefully and

slightly away from the marked side, repeating the procedure until the pointer, held securely and not moved, touches the pot all the way around. When this occurs, your piece is centered.

Now take some fresh clay and roll two or three thick coils. Holding the pot firmly with one hand, press the coils down on the wheel against the pot, securing it firmly to the wheel head. *Check the pot after it is secured to be sure you haven't thrown it off-center.*

3. With the wheel turning counterclockwise at a slow speed, carefully and firmly bring a round-end tool down on the bottom of the pot, starting just slightly away from center. Slowly sweep the tool across the surface of the clay, taking off only a small amount. This is to obtain a smooth, flat, working area. Leave a small nub of clay intact in the center. This is your reference guide—it is a constant reminder of how much clay you have removed and consequently how much clay is left.

Support and control are just as important in foot rimming as in throwing. Some wheels are equipped with a variable-height crossbar or with hand supports. On wheels without these conveniences you can build up your own support by laying a board across books, boxes, brick, etc., (see illustration on page 35). Support your hands slightly above, and as close as possible to, the work. Use a proper foot rimming tool; and hold the tool firmly in both hands. Remember to move the clay—don't let it move you!

4. Now we really get to work—by tooling the outside. Starting at the top (it's the bottom of the pot!) move

(Please turn to Page 35)



bowl by Dido Smith



4. tool outside wall . . .



5. cut outside foot . . .



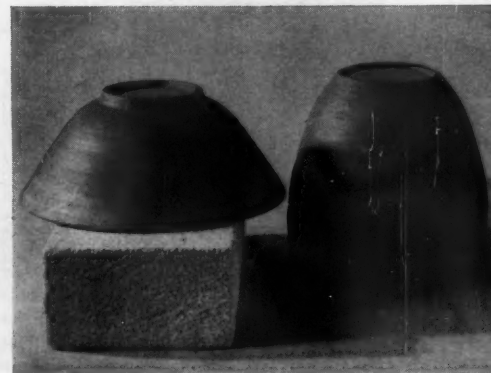
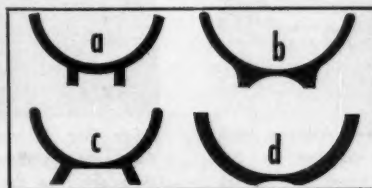
6. remove clay inside foot . . .



7. finish with sponge.

Highly finished, formal foot rims, at right. The demonstration pieces (see also page 35) show both the visible and invisible types.

Different foot rim styles are shown in the sketches below: a) convex, unbroken profile; b) concave; c) flat bottom; d) invisible, concave.



Carving from a solid block of clay is an exciting way to work. It is a method that offers magic and power in return for elbow grease and head work every step of the way. It cannot, literally, be taken lightly but once undertaken progress is rapid and surprising. Carving is the method I reserve for my serious sculpture.

The change which takes place, when a block of clay is transformed into finished sculpture, depends on a combination of factors: the artist's relationship through his work to the world about him, his technical and aesthetic perception, the physical labor involved, and the chemical reaction that takes place in the clay during the firing process. Often involved, too, I believe, is an almost mystical element comparable to the magic which nature performs in the metamorphosis of a crawling caterpillar into a breath-takingly graceful butterfly.

In the block is your idea waiting to be released. Resistance is there between you and the clay. Forms develop swiftly (I, personally, can work faster this way than any other way). Unlike other methods, there is no problem of the clay's staying in shape; but you must have a clear concept of the form you intend to impose on the block. It is exciting. It is *creation*.

Carving brings forth a simple yet powerful statement, devoid of the distractions of too much detail and the fitting of one form upon another as in modeling. Although modeled sculpture of more complicated nature and movement can have lasting power as work of art, you will find that it does not harbor profound content in form or idea. My own more significant works have seemed always to need to be carved.

Selecting the clay for the project, mixing it with grog and oxides to produce the right texture and color, wedging it and aging—all take a little time. Once the clay is wedged, slammed, paddled and worked into a block—perhaps as big a chunk as two hundred pounds—I let it stand, to firm up, until

the following day at least. This is very important for the block should offer some resistance to carving, not like a rock, of course, but good and firm. Then I paddle it again!

Now I am ready to begin creative work, and to give you some idea of how I do it, I reconstruct the way in which I made the horse and rider sculpture called *Homestretch* (top right). It is sketched in my mind, although I may also make a paper sketch and a small clay sketch, too. I do not, however, try to follow any drawing or clay sketch after I am well begun. You and your idea have to grow and develop together as you work. The first time you carve, you are surprised to see how the thing grows and changes and takes shape. You sense and know what three-dimensional form really is. You understand the intactness of sculpture, and the necessity of graying-in forms so that they do not hop out at you but stay in place as a whole. (I have seen students, who previously had modeled and built by coil, do their first really sculptural form by carving; and only then seem to comprehend the power and wonder of sculpture.)

The first real step in carving is the initial drawing on all four sides of the block. I have already, of course, studied the block until I know it better than my own face. I draw on top of the block, too, and this is very important because action of the spine line, the direction in which the head and tail turn, and other movement will show up here. The drawing is brought out to the edges of the clay: carving is never done in the middle of the block but extends to the very outer edges on all sides.

Standing in such a way that I can see what happens on both sides of the piece and working with both hands, one on either side, I slice off large chunks of clay that I do not need, using a nylon cord for the purpose. The operation is a fast one, taking about three minutes. Now I have a silhouette,

Sculpture—lighthearted or serious—is Edris Eckhardt's life, and a full life it is. When not at work on her own pieces, she is teaching art students, hobby groups and children's classes; or demonstrating techniques via television; or writing for CM. In keeping with the holiday spirit, she showed, in CM's Special Christmas Issue (November), how to make what she might call "cheerful but inconsequential" angels and reindeer. Now, in different mood, she tells how she carves sculpture, a method reserved for her most serious and significant work. In a subsequent issue, Miss Eckhardt will describe in detail the technical aspects (preparation of clay, methods of hollowing-out, firing, etc.) which are touched on rather lightly here.—Ed.

A Sculptor Discusses Her CARVING FROM

and it has been very easy.

Every step of the way from now on, you seek to understand the projecting form. All the highest projections are X-ed with a dull drawing pencil—the higher the projection, the bigger the X. Then I take a heavy, coarse modeling tool, and slowly and thoughtfully cut back each form—all over the com-

(Text continued on Page 30)



"Exciting way to work . . ." Author-artist Eckhardt prepares block of clay until



it is firm and resisting. With her idea sketched in her mind, she draws on all the



sides; then, in a fast operation, cuts away large chunks until she has the silhouette.



Now she will identify each projection with a penciled "X", and cut back each form.

Photo: Cleveland Museum of Art



IN THE TEXT, the sculptor reconstructs the process which produced this piece. "Speed and a somber-mood quality were uppermost in my mind . . ." HOMESTRETCH (22" W x 15" H), winner of awards, is owned by the Wichita Museum.

er favorite Way of Working

OM A BLOCK OF CLAY

by EDRIS ECKHARDT



"Sly, strange illusion . . ." the sculptor says of this carved and engraved piece, IN THE GLADE. "It appears to be a dead tree seen from a distance; then you seem to bring it into sharp focus and it is the witch with a bird. The sensation is one of a deep wood where light and shade play tricks with form." Color and the texture of the color are important here—some very flat, some soft in tone; the glaze is thin and sparingly applied. The piece, 24" H, is owned by a private collector.

"One of my most significant pieces" (and perhaps best known) — PAINTED MASK. The eyes are cut through to further the mask-like poignancy of the clown. Unlike most Eckhardt carved sculpture, this one is bright-colored and fully glazed, giving impression of carnival gaiety. "Then the form beneath takes over, making you forget color, seeing only deep despair." Owned by Cleveland Museum of Art, the piece is 15" H.





Underglaze Decoration with sponge

demonstrated by BEA MATNEY

Prepared underglazes have much to offer the ceramist. They handle very much like water colors or tempera, and lend themselves to a wide variety of decorating techniques: stencils, mishima, sgraffito, resist, brush, etc. Unlike slip, they give a range of translucency as well as opacity and they can be applied to either green ware or bisque.

As with any other medium, practice and experimentation will help you get the most out of the material; however, there is nothing inherently difficult about using prepared underglazes. Actually the only real precaution is being sure the colors are of proper consistency. If the underglaze is too thin, it will give poor coverage; if too thick, it will pile up and perhaps peel, flake, or crack off in the kiln. The underglaze should flow easily from the brush—a feel for the exact consistency will develop through practice and experience.

Regarding helpful suggestions —. Always be sure the surface to be decorated is free from dust, grease, or other foreign matter: go over the surface carefully with a slightly dampened sponge immediately before decorating. Make sure you work with a full brush each time. It is good to form the habit of working from a small wide-mouthed container which will enable you to see that the brush is being fully immersed and, not incidentally, will prevent contamination of the bulk of your material. In general, it is advisable to work with as large a brush as the decoration will allow and to use a good-quality camel's hair or sable.

In the autumn leaves decoration on the plate above, various underglaze possibilities were explored: brush and

sponge techniques and translucency and opacity being incorporated. Mrs. Matney recreates the decoration in a step-by-step manner to aid those who wish to take similar decorating ventures.

1. Sketching the decoration on paper is the first step. When transferring decorating ideas to paper, you will find that a considerable amount of adjusting may be required before the decoration fits the shape upon which it will be applied. Here Mrs. Matney sketches from leaves which she collected. The leaves will also aid her in working out the proper coloring scheme.

2. The sketch is completed and is set aside momentarily. The greenware plate which is to receive the decoration is carefully cleaned with a damp soft sponge. The background is to be applied first. A swirl pattern is chosen to give circular movement to the otherwise static leaves.

For the swirl pattern, the piece is mounted on a banding wheel. It can be fastened with clay, tape, or, as Mrs. Matney demonstrates, by merely using several thicknesses of a cotton towel. There is enough friction between the banding wheel and towel, and the towel and plate, to hold nicely. As the wheel turns, a sponge or brush-filled with underglaze is touched down at the center of the piece and pulled in a straight line to the outside edge.

Some of the colors to be used in the leaves are picked up in the background: medium yellow, lime-green, and dark green. Each color is swirled on in turn.

The background is completed by putting a dark brown border around the edge of the plate with a sponge. The

sponge is damp before the underglaze color is applied and, if excess is dabbed off on paper toweling or newspaper, a better textured pattern can be obtained.

3. Underglaze dries very quickly and does not smear easily. You will have no difficulty, therefore, in transferring the pattern you have prepared. You can trace it through graphite paper or simply make an impression through your pattern on the surface of the green ware, then go over the impressed lines with a soft pencil. The graphite or pencil mark will burn out without leaving any marks in the decoration or the surface of the glaze. Don't try to use ordinary typewriter carbon paper; you'll find it smudges and is generally messy to work with.

4. A Chinese brush capable of holding a good supply of color now comes into play. (You could use a #6 or #8 brush.) Here the medium yellow color is brushed on each sketched leaf using full strokes from the edge of the leaf inward. Two light coats are applied so that a degree of translucency will be retained allowing the swirl pattern to show through.

5. Shading is being put in with the brown and with the lime green and dark green. The large Chinese brush is still being used; the colors, however, have been thinned down a little on a glazed tile for even greater translucency. Short strokes are used around the edge of each leaf; nature's own leaves are followed as color guides.

6. The colors are blended by rubbing briskly with the finger. Color is pulled in from the edges toward the center with short, straight strokes, not



1.



2.



3.

and brush

circular. Underglaze powder will form on the surface and should be blown away.

7. A liner brush (00) is now used to outline each of the leaves (in dark green) and to sketch in the veins.

8. For accents or highlights, Mrs. Matney uses sgraffito around the outside edge of each leaf.

9. All dust from the sgraffito technique is carefully removed from the surface, and clear glaze is applied. Here the first coat is being brushed on. One or two additional coats, each going on in a different direction, will be given to assure complete coverage of the plate. (Of course, the piece could have been dipped or sprayed.) After firing — the finished piece is shown on the opposite page.

This is not a difficult type of decoration to accomplish. Of course, it involves more techniques and attention to details than does, for example, slip painting. In your attention to these details, be careful that you don't forget you are decorating pottery and that the shape is important. One way to avoid this pitfall is to develop the technique through practice so that you can concentrate on the decoration as a whole, rather than on individual self-conscious brush strokes. One handy way to practice brush strokes and coloring effects is to work on a piece of hard-fired bisque which you will find is easily washed off and dried, ready to be used again for additional practice.

In subsequent articles, various decorating and ornamenting techniques using prepared underglazes will be demonstrated. ●



4.



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6.



7.



8.



9.

How to make A PLATTER

by JOHN KENNY

Part of a series outlining easy steps for making useful yet attractive objects from clay, by an author well-known to ceramists.—Ed.

You can produce a handsome rectangular platter like the one shown here by simply draping and shaping a layer of clay over a hump of clay. Step-by-step this is the way it is done.

1. Cut a pattern for the dish from a piece of paper, and trace the outline of it on a wooden drawing board.
2. Within the penciled outline, form a hump of clay—this is the shape the inside of the platter will take. In order to get just the height (or depth) you want, use strips of wood as guides; use another stick to scrape and smooth the surface.
3. Lay two layers of cloth over the hump.
4. Roll out a layer of clay and, using the same paper pattern, cut the shape for the platter, leaving it one-half inch wider than the pattern all the way around.
5. Press this layer of clay over the cloth-covered hump.

6. Lightly roll over the surface to help shape the platter.
7. While the piece is still on the hump, make a foot from a thin cylinder of clay and fasten it to the base.
8. Secure the foot by working the clay together with a modeling tool. Then leave the platter to dry over night. Next morning, you can easily lift it off the hump by lifting one layer of cloth with it.
9. While the platter is still leather hard, you can trim rough edges, and finish it with scrapers and sponge. Patience and care at this point will reward you with satisfying results.

Finished and glazed, the platter (top of page) is a piece of ceramic ware that combines beauty and utility. ●



1.
2.
3.



4.
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6.



7.
8.
9.



WHAT ARE LITTLE ZEBRAS MADE OF?

by PHIL ALLEN

See the sturdy little zebra sporting stripes as zebras do. This compact and proper creature grew out of only a few rolls and small balls of clay; and Gary shows us how it happened.

1. The parts that go to make the animal: two rolls of clay curved like horseshoes to form the legs and body; a short, fat roll bent like a hook, and cut on a slant at one end, to be the neck and head; a thin roll to make the mane, a heavy nub for the tail, and two pellets for ears.

2. Gary assembles the creature on a bisque tile which can be moved around easily. He sets the two curved rolls side by side, and presses them gently together across the top to make a good strong back. A chunk of clay beneath keeps the span from collapsing while he works; a piece of paper separates the support from the clay above so it won't stick. With his left hand supporting the arched back, Gary pushes the neck firmly in place. Now he will add the mane which has been flattened somewhat, the tail and ears which have been shaped a little, and eyes which are merely two small buttons of clay.

You must be careful, Gary knows, about joining each section securely. (It's discouraging when your work falls apart while drying or firing!) If the clay is plastic, not too soft and not too hard, the joints can be worked together with fingers or a modeling tool. But if there is any question about the sticking quality of the clay, the areas to be joined should first be covered with thick slip made from the same clay (the slip acts like glue).

3. Everything is in place. The animal's back is arched, the legs are braced and the head is up. The mane curves over the head and down to the back. Gary smooths rough spots here and there with a wooden tool. He uses a banding wheel because it is easier to work when you can turn the piece around; moreover, it gives him a chance to see how his creation looks from all sides. When he feels it is finished, he sets it aside to dry thoroughly. Then he can decorate it.

4. Everyone knows that a zebra has stripes, but does everyone know how they go? A picture or a trip to the zoo, Gary says, gives you the idea. First, he covers the animal with a white engobe so the red clay will not show. Then he carefully paints the stripes on with underglaze. Finally, he covers the whole piece with transparent glaze, and it is ready to go into the kiln for firing.

Gary thinks that making animals out of clay is easy. All you have to do is take a good look at the creature you want to make, figure out what shapes and color markings will make it look like a zebra, say, instead of a lion—and go to work. When it comes to decorating, you can really let yourself go. Gary's zebra, for example, happens to be blue and white but it could have been green and yellow, Gary says. •



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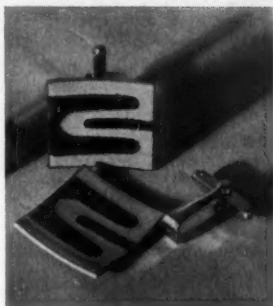
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CM briefs...



enameled copper cuff links

It may not be a matter of minutes but in a surprisingly short time you can acquire a colorful pair of enameled cuff links for your French-cuffed shirts. The process is simple, involving only two small copper shapes to be enameled back and front, and findings to be attached when the enameling is done.

1. First the backs of the copper shapes: clean them thoroughly with ordinary kitchen copper cleaner—you can't enamel on dirty metal! (And if you need to brush up on various phases of enameling, refer back to Jean O'Hara's series, which has been running in CM since last June.)

2. Place a small square of paper on the center of each back so you will have bare metal for cementing the findings

later; then spray the backs with gum solution, and counter enamel by the sift method.

3. Peel the little stencils off (carefully).

4. Firing: since only one side is enameled, just set the pieces on marinite and pop them into the kiln.

5. Use copper cleaner again to take off all fire-scale which formed on the bare metal during firing.

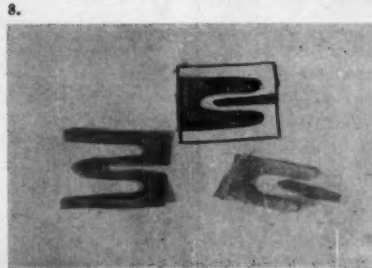
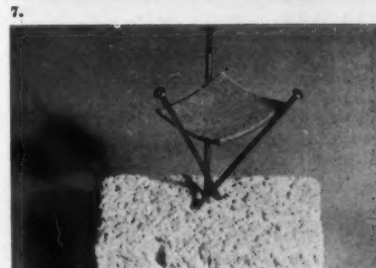
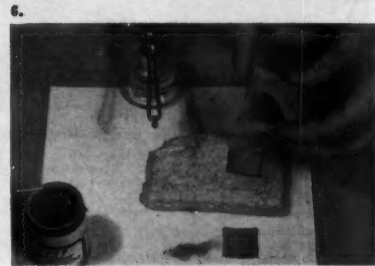
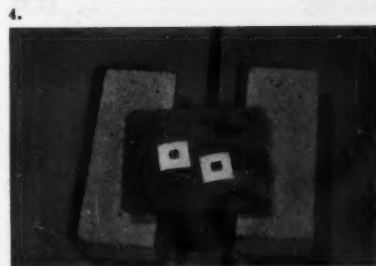
6. Now we are ready for the front, or important, side of the cuff links. Cover with gum solution and dust on enamel—a light color as background for the dark, stenciled design. (A cellulose sponge makes a fine working surface because you can easily reach under the metal shape to pick it up.)

7. Fire, and this time use a trivet—now that *both* sides of the metal are enameled, it must be suspended.

8. For the design on the cuff links, sketch a shape and cut a stencil from paper. Place it—either the positive or the negative—on the enameled pieces and sift a contrasting color overall. (A thin application gives the salt-and-pepper texture seen here.)

9. Peel off the stencil, fire, attach the findings with jewelry cement, and—

10. *Voila!* your French cuffs can sport accessories which are really *different* as well as attractive—*Peter Rosti, Brooklyn, N.Y.*

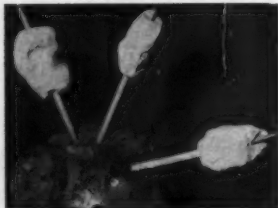


ceramic beads



Ceramic beads are easy to make—especially the rather rough but attractive shapes. Follow through on the instructions below, and you will see how simple the process is.

1. Pinch beads out of plastic clay and shape by hand. If you like the "dug-up" look," (see piece below) work with rather dry clay. Before the clay is leather hard, drill the hole using a regular drill bit. Don't forget to allow for shrinkage and give some thought at this point to how you

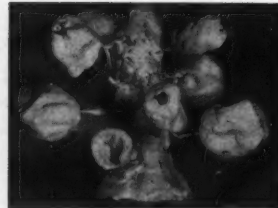
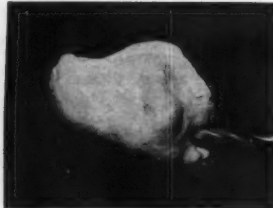


are going to string your beads. You can use a leather thong, silver chain, nylon thread, etc.; and each requires a different sized hole.

2. When the beads are thoroughly dry, mount them on round, tapered wooden sticks. Holding the end of the stick, dip the bead into glaze—twice for vivid coloring—and then insert the stick in a wad of clay for drying.

3. A slightly larger drill bit is now used to remove glaze from the inside of the hole and also to bevel the glaze around the edge to keep the hole from being filled during firing.

4. For firing, I like to mount the beads on a tree which I made myself. The tree consists of a series of nichrome wires embedded in a clay post. The wires hold the beads and the post can act as a shelf support, saving space in the kiln. It is a good idea to make the post with a wider bottom so it will not topple when not used as a shelf post. A 16-to 20-gauge nichrome wire works fine; if a lighter wire is used, twist two strands together. A slight kink put in, or left in, the wire will help hold the beads in place. Be sure to put a generous amount of kiln wash on the wires as well as on the post before using.—Peg Townsend, Tucson, Ariz.



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ceramic rings



I was testing new glazes when the thought struck me that the finished samples looked like the large stones you see in costume rings. I made the samples smaller and added a little decoration; and the jewel effect pleased me. In other words, I found making a ceramic ring as easy as making a glaze sample. Follow me through the steps and I think you will agree.

From 1/4-inch-thick slab of clay, cut a rectangle approximately 1 x 5/8-inch; and from a 1/12-inch-thick slab, cut another rectangle approximately 5/8 x 1/2-inch. Fasten the smaller piece on top of the thick one with slip.

The base can be left smooth or textured like hammered or etched metal. This is the part that may be overglazed with silver or gold to give the effect of a setting.

Make a slit in either side of the setting so that a metal ring band can be inserted, and remember that clay shrinks. Be sure the openings are large and deep enough for the band. When thoroughly dry, the ring is ready for firing and glazing in colors and textures of your choice.

The ring band may be silver or gold, depending on the glaze used. Sterling silver can be purchased from almost any arts and crafts supply dealer and he will cut it to the size desired. I would suggest a piece of 20-gauge, cut 1/2-inch wide and about 2 inches long depending on the size of your finger. If you want a gold band, look for a gold refining company (telephone directories list them under "Precious Metals"). The gauge would be the same as in silver. Since the band is detachable, you need only one for as many stones as you care to make.

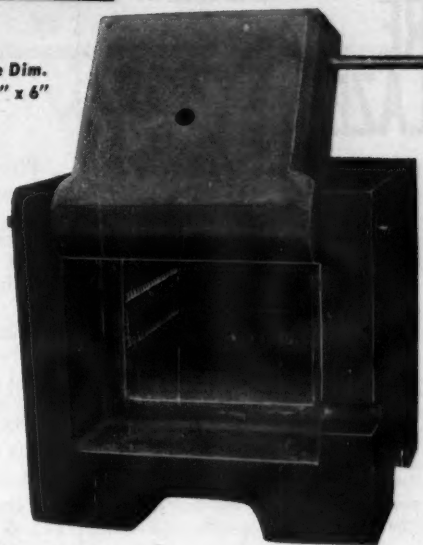
Each ring can be an original. The directions here are for an oblong shape but the same basic steps would apply for round, square, octagonal and oval rings. Color possibilities are limitless, although transparent greens, black and opaque turquoise have a very jewel-like quality. The whole ring can be overglazed with gold or silver, lusters can be used effectively. These are only a few suggestions—you will have more.—Gen Ann Harris, Covington, Ky.



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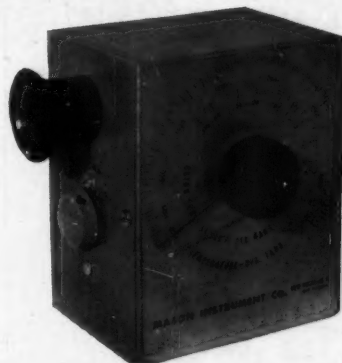
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CLAY: Plasticity & Shortness

by *Edgar Penfield*

Plasticity is one of the most important characteristics of clays. Without it, it seems certain that primitive peoples would not have developed the art of pottery-making, for how could they have fashioned their ware? Plasticity is essential in all processes of forming, even in casting and dry-pressing, because hand-in-hand with it are found strength and shrinkage. Strength to resist handling before firing is desirable in any ceramic product and shrinkage is necessary for easy mold release.

Most ceramic workers take plasticity for granted because they have never had to struggle with a short clay (lacking sufficient plasticity for its intended use.) If used for throwing, a short clay will split when stretched and, if used for coil-building or slab-construction, its low plasticity will make for a poor bonding together of the various parts. The fact that a clay body is short does not necessarily eliminate it from consideration as a usable material. Shortness can be corrected but to do it you must have some concept of plasticity.

Many theories about plasticity exist. Some of them seem quite reasonable, and one or two of them sound as though they had been evolved by a medieval physicist. If we look over all the theories (which we will not do) and then do some observing and thinking of our own, we can come up with ideas as valid as the next person's. So—after sifting through the ideas of others, as well as our own thoughts and observations, we discover two factors which seem of primary importance in affecting plasticity. These are *grain size* and *colloid content*.

All highly plastic ceramic materials are very fine in grain-size or at least the greater part of their composition is fine-grained. Certainly we would be unable to find even a hint of plasticity in a bucketful of small wet pebbles. The same pebbles, crushed to fine sand and dampened, could be used for simple sand-sculpture, and could be described as showing a suggestion of plasticity. The sand could be pulverized to a fine powder and this, with the right water content, would show still greater tendency toward plasticity. If we could go on grinding we might reach a degree of fineness which would allow the mass to exhibit true plasticity.

The term "colloid" may refer either

to matter in an extreme state of subdivision or to substances of a gelatin-like consistency. Continued grinding may produce some material of colloidal fineness but the greater part of the plasticity-producing colloid content is of the jellylike type. These materials are usually organic in origin, being the residue of vegetable matter and bacterial growth. The gelatinous colloids give bodies great cohesiveness and, through their lubricating ability, impart the great mobility which is characteristic of highly plastic clay bodies. The mineral bentonite, however, is an example of a colloid substance of non-organic origin. It is a weathered volcanic ash capable of absorbing great amounts of water. In doing so it swells into a gelatinous mass and has the power, when added in small percentages, to give marked increases in plasticity to ceramic mixtures. With care, powdered flint having an addition of five per cent bentonite can be thrown on the potter's wheel. Some natural clays of the western United States owe their extreme plasticity to bentonite.

A moderately plastic clay may be fine-grained but relatively free of colloidal material, or it may be comparatively coarse but rich in its colloidal content. The most plastic clays will be fine-grained and also richly endowed with colloidal substances. Conversely, a short clay may be coarse-grained; it may be deficient in colloids; or it may have both faults. While it is possible and sometimes feasible to decrease particle-size by prolonged grinding, the studio potter will usually find it more practical to alter the clay content of a short body by the partial substitution of a very fine-grained clay such as a ball clay.

If a short body is known to be of fine particle-size, several weeks of aging in the plastic state may give it the needed workability. Aging affords opportunity for bacterial activity, the by-products of which induce increased plasticity. Some clays, however, will not support bacterial growth because of a lack of suitable food in the form of organic material. In lieu of aging, these clays can be treated by the addition of two or three per cent of bentonite. You should mix it thoroughly with the dry powdered clay before adding water. ●



answers to questions

CONDUCTED BY KEN SMITH

Q. I am having trouble with underglaze colors after having used them without difficulty for some time. Dark colors such as black and dark green show a yellow halo; colors seem rather dull now; certain colors (black, dark green and blue particularly) often develop a fuzzy edge. The orange color tends to repel the glaze (although not entirely) causing it to bunch up in milky gobs. All of these difficulties have occurred at once. Could the underglaze medium I am using have deteriorated with age and caused the trouble? I have had it for over a year.

A. Your question is quite typical of many we receive in that you give insufficient information. To give a helpful reply, we would need much more detail, such as the source of the underglaze color, method of application, whether applied to greenware or bisque, type of glaze used over the colors and method of application, firing temperature, type of body employed, and so forth. There are so many possible sources of difficulty, it is virtually impossible to solve a problem unless all of the facts in the case are given.

To venture a guess, if nothing else in your method of working is changed, it could very well be that the medium deteriorated with age or through contamination and is creating the difficulty. You should bring this question to the attention of your supplier. If you have changed the clear glaze which you use over the colors—that could be the source of your problem. The type of covering glaze is important as it can react unfavorably with the colors.

Q. What kind of brushes are best for the fluff-brush method Mrs. Holst described in her October CM article?

A. Mrs. Holst recommends that you use camel-hair brushes of large sizes—anywhere from No. 6 to No. 12.

Q. I made a plaster wedging board but find that the clay picks up bits of the plaster so that the surface is now quite pitted. Can you tell me why this happens and also whether the plaster will be harmful to the clay?

A. A good mix of plaster should not be so soft as to crumble under the impact of wedging. After continued use, the plaster surface can become soft and pieces will then break loose. Try a denser plaster/water mixture, such as two pounds of plaster to one quart of water, and be sure you are using pottery plaster. A better surface for wedging would be a medium-weight canvas stretched tightly across a firm base.

The small pieces of plaster in the clay will certainly prove to be detrimental when the clay is fired. A piece the size of a pin-head or smaller can crack the ware or cause surface chipping.

Q. In recent issues of CM a "thick slip made from the same clay you are working with" has been recommended for holding together different parts of hand-built pottery and sculpture. What are the necessary ingredients for this slip and why is "same clay" so carefully specified?

A. The slip referred to is nothing more than a rather thick mixture of clay and water. No other ingredients are required. The "same clay" is specified so there will be no cracking at the joints; cracking could occur if different clays—having different shrinkage—were used.

Direct your inquiry to Questions Editor, c/o Ceramics Monthly, 3494 No. High St., Columbus 14, O., enclosing stamped reply envelope. Questions of general interest appear in this column.

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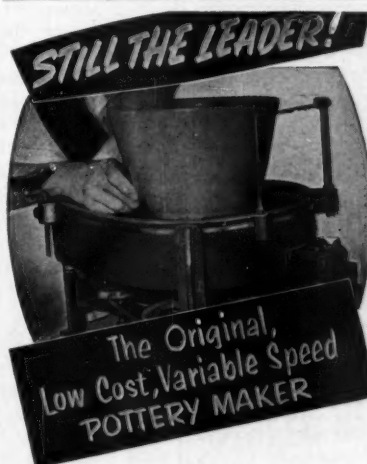
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Eckhardt: Carving

(Begins on Page 18)

position, not just on one side—and not too deep the first time around. More clay can always be cut off but I never add clay. I draw all over again, stand back and study each side from a distance of five or six feet.

Lesser projections are now X-ed and cut back with the large modeling tool. Again I draw and study. Drawing is done to define the planes, the big ones first, the smaller planes later. Standing back, I notice the color of my sculpture. Most carved sculpture does not need deep, black holes. In some of my work, I carve fairly deep caverns but these are planned—needed accents, balanced by other related darks.

In the finished carving of the horse and rider, you will notice little or no detail. This adds to the impression of speed. The last burst of speed on a circular track is suggested by the curve of the horse's spine, as seen from the top, and by the outthrust of horse and rider to counteract going around a curve at full speed. As you work, you have to feel this impression in every muscle you have in order for it to be a fast-running horse on a circular track. You have to feel what the rider feels, and how he balances; and you have also to put yourself in the position of the horse as well as of the beholder whose viewpoint you are portraying. The eye of the horse is cut right through to the other side. It gives the spectral note needed so this will not be confused with just a simple race. The straining cavern of mouth and nostrils also add to the effect. The subject, you see, is death on horseback.

When the sculpture is about three-fourths done, and before the surfaces are textured or finished, I turn it over carefully onto a feather pillow and hollow it out with a wire-loop tool. I make perhaps as many as two hundred small vent holes in the walls—these to aid drying and firing, and lighten weight.

When the piece is picked up again, it should weigh as much as your eye says it should. If heavier or lighter than your eye estimated, you have a sense of being cheated, as though something is wrong in the construction. That is the reason *Homestretch* could never be aesthetic if it were thin-cast. There is a subtle relationship between you and what you see, a balance-sense.

With the deep carving done, you are ready, after more careful study, to complete the details and texture the clay if necessary or desirable. Since speed was what I wanted in this sculpture, there was, of course, no engraving or sharp detail.

Much of the solid, or block, feel

(Please turn to Page 32)

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The Overglaze Page

by ZENA S. HOLST

RAISED PASTE

Paste for raised gold is applied in high relief for ornate designs; after firing it is covered with gold. It is used mostly for scrolls and broken lines in the finishing of bands and motifs, and is especially appropriate when placed at the edges of solid gold bands and designs, although it is also used over colors and lusters. Small dots of paste are used to surround the colored jewels made of Chinese paste or enamels. *This yellow colored paste is specifically prepared to be covered with gold, and for no other purpose; is of a composition to receive only the unfluxed metals.* The type of decoration for which it is appropriate is usually done on hard porcelain china such as wedding and cake plates and so the burnish unfluxed metal is used. The design is generally fancy, conventional or semi-conventional, and of the dainty Dresden type.

Other uses for relief paste work are in conjunction with enamels and Chinese pastes on decorative art objects. It is a good foundation for gold work on bisque, especially when doing Oriental designs that require much metal. The regular liquid gold will not stay bright over the paste. Be sure to use the unfluxed gold at all times.

The paste comes prepared in a jar and also in powdered form in a vial. The prepared must be stirred well from the bottom and thinned with pure spirits of turpentine to proper consistency for flowing on in relief. To apply the decoration, use a fine pointed sable brush; dip into the paste, allow it to drop off the brush and then pull it into a scroll or line. It takes practice to form graceful raised scrolls. For dots, the paste should be of heavy enough consistency to stand up to a peak when dropped, actually stringy.

The powdered form must be mixed with medium specifically prepared for relief paste. It is dark colored and heavy. Use just enough to hold the powder together in a very thick mass. Grind well on a glass palette by turning the thick mass over and over with the palette knife, and at the same time breathe (not blow) on it with every turn. The warm moisture from the breath will cause the mass to become tacky. Continue mixing until it is so tacky it cannot be turned, then start

thinning with turpentine until of good consistency for laying on the design.

Do not artificially dry your ware after applying raised paste: allow several hours before placing in the kiln. It should dry dull. If too much medium has been added, the raised paste will flatten in the firing. This paste is sensitive like opaque enamels and will crackle or chip if not properly prepared. If the first application is not high enough in relief, it can be built up before firing. Let the first layer dry, but not too dry to hold the second layer. Relief paste can withstand as many as three firings, but it is best to try to complete the metal coverage in the second fire. If the painted decoration requires several firings, it is best to have it finished before applying paste. •

THE HOLST NOTEBOOK

♦ *I make a mess of gold work and some purple spots always show after firing. How can I avoid this?*

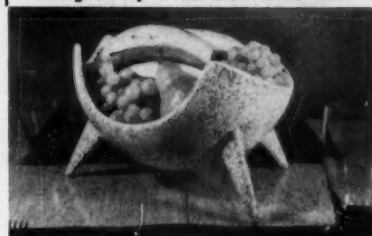
You evidently try to remove irregularities and do not clean off the gold thoroughly. Liquid metals are very strong and the best medium for removing them is saliva. Moisten a bit of cotton wrapped around a toothpick, and change the cotton often. Paste metals may be removed, cleaned or straightened out with denatured alcohol and a stiff, pointed brush, a sable being good for the purpose. Again, you may use saliva and cotton if you wish: there is nothing to equal it.

♦ *It is impossible for me to get an even edge of metal on dishes. How do you do it?*

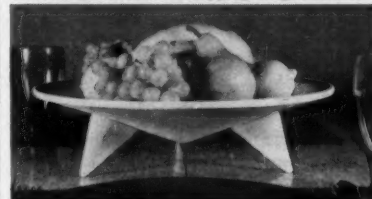
Metals are applied to edges of dishes with the finger, not with a brush. Dip cushion tip of forefinger into prepared metal (paste or liquid) and apply to edge by rubbing around and around. Do not pick up too much metal at one time and finish each small section as continued around. If metal is smooth on the finger, it will go on smoothly and with very even lines inside and outside the edge. This is impossible to accomplish with a brush. Use this same method when doing colored edges with mineral colors.

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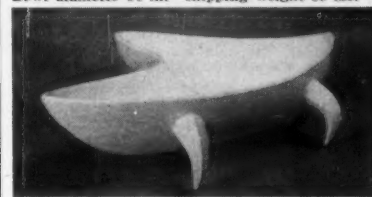
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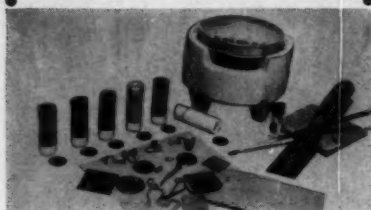
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Eckhardt: Carving

(Continued from Page 30)

must be left in your carving — something of the elemental, something of the resisting strength of the leather-hard clay block. It should have dignity, simplicity and a sense of bigness. If it has these, the carving is finished and can stand, lightly covered, until it is almost but not quite dry.

During the color planning for the *Homestretch*, the suggestion of speed, of running from light into darkness, and a somber-mood quality were uppermost in my mind. I knew at once that I would use engobes, stepped up with glazes, on the high-lighted surfaces only. The glaze would be spatter-sprayed because a spattered effect would suggest speed. There would be two colors—light with dark overtones—in addition to the red of the clay.

I sprayed from all sides, lightly here, heavily there, with the gun adjusted so I could be sure of a rather long spatter. I sprayed from the top in such a way that plenty of red and putty color would show through producing a double effect—of speed and of the horse running out of light into dark.

Then the firing. Firing carved sculpture that is large and heavy, with walls of uneven thickness, is quite different from firing pottery. You have something you must treat as a solid which undergoes far greater stress and strain than a thin-walled pot. I take large sculpture through long, slow firing, raising the temperature very, very gradually in the beginning.

When, finally, the kiln door is opened, I feel that heart-thumping excitement that twenty-two years of firing ceramics has not dulled. I remember the block of clay. I remember my part in freeing the form from the block, the oxides I used to bring color, and the fire which caused a chemical structure-change in the clay. I think of metamorphosis, meaning "change in form, structure or substance, transformation by magic or witchcraft," and I decide that metamorphosis has truly taken place. ●

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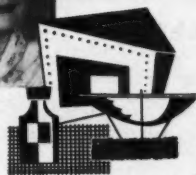
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Enameling on Metal

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EFFECTS & DEFECTS

EFFECT: Luster Accents

Liquid metallic lusters are frequently used for the final accents on an enameled piece (as well as for numbering test samples, adding your signature, etc.). Those most commonly used are gold, platinum and palladium. They come already prepared in liquid form, and you need only shake the bottle well before applying. But these lusters are tricky materials to handle and fire. It would be well to learn their habits by experimenting on some samples before attempting to use them on finished pieces.

The fired enamel on which the luster is to be applied should first be cleaned with carbon tetrachloride (lighter fluid) or a similar solution. Then the liquid luster is applied with a brush or, in the case of very fine lines, with a *croquille* pen. The application should be thin yet heavy enough to appear dark and opaque before firing; if it is light and weak, it will not show at all when it comes from the kiln.

Before it is fired, luster must be thoroughly dry: set it on top of a warm kiln for at least several hours, preferably overnight. You fire at lower-than-normal temperature until the luster becomes bright and fixed to the surface. Both the temperature and the firing



LAST TOUCH—fine lines of liquid metallic luster accentuating design on this dish.

time will vary according to the base enamel on the piece; but, in general, about 1200°F., for two or three minutes is about right. With luster, there is more chance of overfiring than of underfiring. You can tell whether it is properly fired down by lightly scratching it with a pointed tool: if a mark is left, the luster is not fired enough. After the firing, luster can be brightened by rubbing it with a moistened scouring powder.

Rich materials lose their effect by overuse so try to reserve the lusters for special accents in your enameling.

DEFECT: Firescale

Good housekeeping is a *must* in enameling. If you want to spare yourself disappointments, you can't be too fussy about keeping all materials, work areas and firing equipment clean. Foreign matter in enamels has the embarrassing habit of turning up as black specks embedded in the fired piece (or as bubbles, pits or cloudy color).

Firescale is one of the chief offenders. Be sure to keep firescale off all your equipment so it won't get into your enamel colors or onto the next piece to



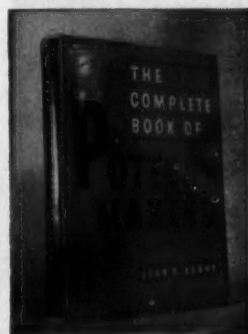
be fired. When you take a piece from the kiln don't set it next to one that is about to go in because firescale can pop right off the edge of the cooling, fired piece onto the unfired one. The same thing can happen if you set the fired piece near your enamel colors. And, of course, always clean firescale completely off bare metal after a firing; the unenameled edges of the piece should be cleaned too—by stoning.

If you have the black-speck defect after a firing, you may be able to repair the damage. If it is a surface matter, you can try stoning the specks out, using a fine-grade Carborundum stone under running water; then re-enameling and/or refiring. If the enamel is a transparent and the specks are far below the surface, stoning may turn into a long operation; it might be advisable to cover the defect with opaque enamel.

Obviously, it is easier to prevent mishaps than to repair them!

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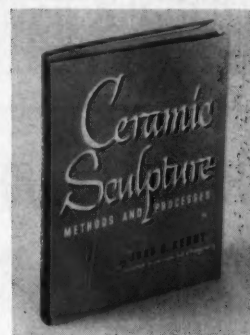


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Closing a thousand-year gap in ceramic know-how was the assignment **Mary Kring Risley** (below, left) undertook when she went to the Philippines three years ago to take part in a program to establish modern industry in the islands.

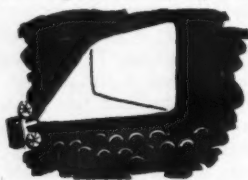
For countless centuries, as a sideline to farming, women in the villages had made porous jugs for cooling water and soft cooking pots for steaming rice. The pots were beaten out by hand, roughly shaped by punching the clay as it revolved on a crude turntable; then given full, round shape by paddling on the outside against a round stone on the inside. Glazes were unknown. Firing was a community affair with pots stacked together in the open, covered with rice straw or pine needles. (See photos at right.)

Mary's job was to teach modern techniques of pottery making. Over a two-year period she worked with enthusiastic Filipinos showing them how to make clay: bodies, glazes and kilns; throw on the wheel, jigger and slip cast; fire a big kiln. The first Philippine glazes emerged; improved plans for community kilns evolved. And, the key to the program, students returned home to the villages to spread the knowledge of hitherto unheard-of ways of pursuing an ancient craft.

Her assignment completed, the American girl returned to the United States. Now she is teaching ceramics at Wesleyan University (Connecticut) and making a name for herself as a studio potter—two of her pieces, for example, in the 18th Ceramic National. Looking back at her Philippine experience, Mary recalls the note one of her trainees left telling why he had quit watching a new, experimental kiln. "Mam," he wrote, "the cone she gives no hope to fall." Kilns, cones and ceramics are in better working order in the islands these days.



FILMS, we said a year ago (and we say it again), are just what you need to spark that club meeting or class at school. The occasion was the release of CM's descriptive report on twenty-five motion pictures about ceramics (January 1954). We've received many requests to bring the film list up-to-date and



republish. As far as we have been able to determine, there have been no substantial changes and the list is just as accurate today as it was when published. But we'll meet you halfway. We have run off a quantity of reprints: if your list has strayed (or frayed) send us a stamped, addressed envelope, and we'll forward a copy to you.

ONCE-OVER BY EXPERTS: Chicago Potters Guild members, at a recent meeting, offered up their own creations for evaluation by a panel of experts which included K. L. Boynton (CM writer on Scandinavian ceramics). Scheduled for the next get together: a guest demonstration of throwing on the wheel.

STRICTLY AMATEUR is the way Delaware's

newly formed hobby club, **Blue Clay Chicks**, is billed. Purpose: to exchange ideas and promote activities. Interested? Notify Mrs. Betty Heiser, 1108 Prospect Ave., Bellefonte, Del... **BETTER CRAFTSMANSHIP** and a new site for their annual Craft Fair are current goals of the **Pennsylvania Guild of Craftsmen**. A potter, **John Weikel** of Palmerton, continues as President of the fifteen-chapter, thousand-member organization... **SOMETHING TO SEE:** Five hundred pieces of European pottery and porcelains including Meissen and Sevres, at the **Metropolitan Museum in New York**.

KIDS' BENEFIT: Thanks to the **Kenmore (N. Y.) Ceramic Guild**, a small but energetic band of hobbyists, local retarded children are having fun with clay. Materials and weekly instruction being provided by Guild members. (Guide for the clay Christmas trees the youngsters made for the holidays was the November issue of CM, according to Guild-er **Phyllis Monroe**.)

SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS—

Don't keep it to yourself. Let CM readers know what's going on in your ceramic bailiwick whether it's a world-shaking event or just plain good news about people (especially welcome). Ceramists all over the country are doing things—organizing, electing; learning, teaching; competing, judging; adventuring, discovering. So take your pen and give us the **WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE**.

Cutting Foot Rims

(Begins on Page 16)

the rigidly held tool slowly down the outside wall as the wheel turns at slow speed, cutting the excess clay as far down as the mark you made when centering. Don't attempt to remove too much clay at one time because a mis-step can easily create a gouge which



INVISIBLE FOOT RIM being cut into a tall pot is demonstrated above. The procedure is essentially the same as for the visible foot rim: the outside shape is tooled to the base of the pot and the bottom is then cut out to form the foot. The use of a structure of brick and a board to give rigid support to the hand is also shown. Note that the support is placed above and as close to the work as possible and that the tool is held firmly in both hands.

will ruin the pot. Take off a small amount of clay each time, repeating the operation several times until the excess clay has been removed.

5. We will cut a visible foot on this particular bowl; the shaping of the outside is to be completed at this point. Proceed carefully in order not to remove too much rim. The thickness of the bottom will determine the height to which the rim can be cut; aesthetics and proportions, however, also play an important role. Bend down until you are at eye level with the pot and check the diameter of the foot rim to see if it is in good proportion to the pot as a whole; also check the height of the rim, making sure it is in good proportion to its diameter and the profile of the pot.

6. Excess clay on the inside of the rim is now removed. Note that the small nub of clay is still left in the exact center to indicate the amount of clay remaining in the bottom. Not until

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STUDIOS NOTE: New directory listings to begin with the February issue accepted up to 15th of January.

the foot rim is complete is the center nub tooled off.

7. Sponge the bottom area lightly, while the wheel revolves slowly, to give the pot a smooth finish and to remove any burrs left by the cutting tools.

If throwing ridges have been left by your fingers on the outside of the pot, you may want to approximate these at the bottom of the pot after the excess clay has been cut off. You can do this with your cutting tools. Try to make the transition between the throwing marks left by your fingers and the

tooled area as smooth as possible; for a better blending of the two areas gently sponge the whole outside surface.

The pot is now removed from the wheel and set aside for drying. A few basic types of foot rims are shown in the sketch on page 17. Whether you choose a visible or any invisible type of foot, a good rule to remember is that the bottom should be tooled until it is as thin as the top rim of the pot or thinner. A thick wall in the bottom makes the pot heavier than it looks, and this is undesirable. ●

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Mosaics

(Begins on Page 15)

pieces and binds them, the surface later cleaned with methyl ethyl ketone.

—In the case of mosaic panels, tesserae may be fastened to masonite or to a wooden board, or directly to a wall. If masonite is used, bracing is advisable because the tiles are heavy and



KEY to tesserae-making lies in knowing just the right moment to cut the slab of damp clay that is covered with unfired glaze. Usually, it can be done an hour or two after glazing. Here, the pieces are cut; in the foreground, a collection of fired tesserae in varied shapes and colors.

masonite tends to warp and bend. Angle iron is used for bracing and framing; and it must be added before the tesserae are laid in place.

—It is not absolutely necessary, but a mosaic may be, and often is, grouted which means filling the tiny crevices between the tesserae with tile cement. The cement may be colored (powdered pigment added before mixing with water) to bring out or subdue certain portions of the mosaic. White grout, for example, is attractive with black tesserae; but if the black area is busy, it can be quieted with a darkened grout.

With these suggestions on technique Sister Magdalen Mary comes back to the all-important matter of design.

—A mosaic is not a painting—allow the tesserae to suggest the lines and shapes. If a drawing is made it should be in the nature of a diagram which tells *where* to put head and hands, etc., but not *what* the shapes shall be.

—The mosaic should be enjoyable for itself alone regardless of subject. If its value lies only in its store-telling ability, the mosaic has failed.

—Last but not least, forget all art rules. An inventor is one who did not know it could not be done. Forget the well-meant criticisms of family and friends. Above all, forget yourself. ●

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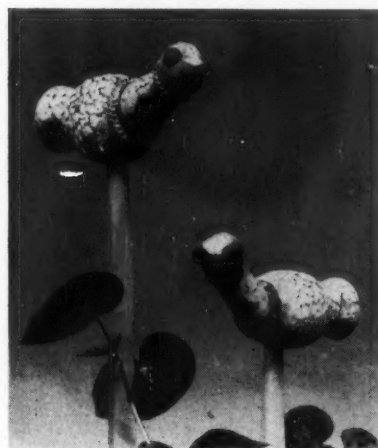
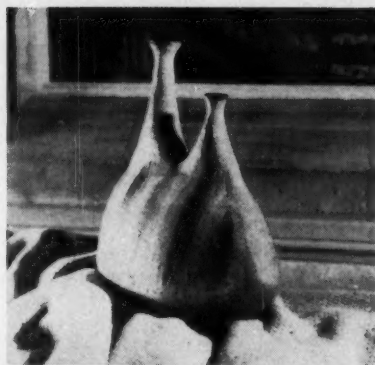
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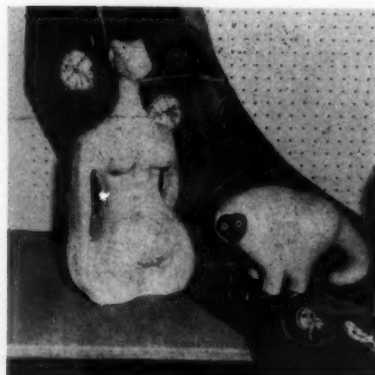
WISCONSIN DESIGNER-CRAFTSMEN

Culminating a trend noticeable in recent years, ceramics took the lead in the 34th Annual Wisconsin Designer-Craftsmen at Milwaukee Art Institute, both in awards and number of entries. Five of sixteen awards made, including the two top honors, went to potters. Toshiko Takaezu, Madison, took the highest award for a group of stoneware pots, a two-necked, free-form bottle (top) among them. The other top winner was Harvey K. Littleton, Verona (Wisc.), for his large, slip-decorated bowl (right; the bottle is also his). Of nearly three hundred pieces of craft work accepted by the jury, about half were ceramics.



CONNECTICUT CRAFTS

Patio Birds captured first prize in ceramics for Aile Irene Hale of Hampton at the small and beautifully displayed Connecticut Crafts 1954 show last fall. The sculpture (wheel-thrown stoneware with white mat glaze mottled decoration) can be mounted on poles out-of-doors. The prize: \$25 from B. F. Drakenfeld & Co. Also a winner, Ben Abadie of Wilton, with a small vase decorated in the sgraffito technique—second in ceramics. One of many activities of the Society of Connecticut Craftsmen, the show was co-sponsored by the Silvermine Guild of Artists at Norwalk.



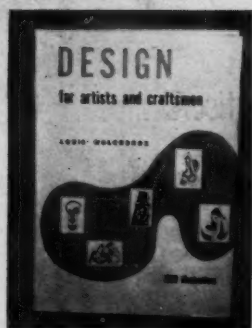
FLORIDA CRAFTSMAN

Miska Petersham of St. Petersburg almost monopolized prizes at the Fourth Annual Florida Craftsman show, taking first and third in ceramics and second in sculpture (animal far right). Memphis Wood of Jacksonville, however, won first in sculpture with *Fecundity*, a terra cotta, textured figure (right). All three awards in enamels went to Charles Brown of Mandarin. The exhibition is a project of the Florida Federation of Art in conjunction with Jacksonville Art Museum where it is held.

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January, 1955

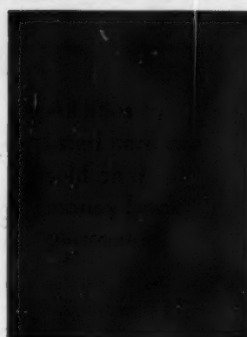
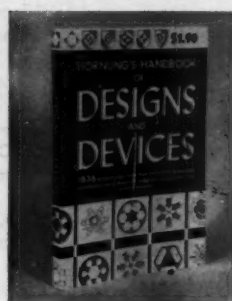
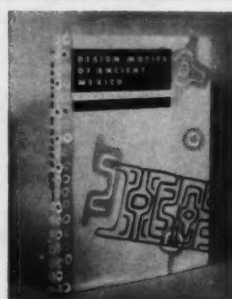
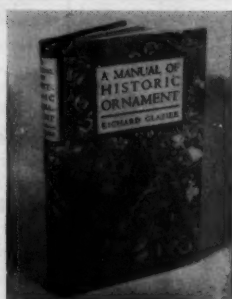
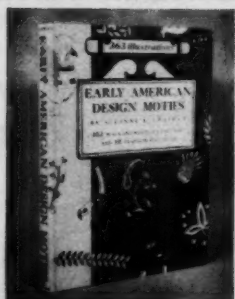
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